



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Subchapter:	1	Recruitment of Resource Homes (Foster and Adoption)	
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Introduction 8-17-90

Adoption and foster home recruitment has the dual purpose of enhancing public awareness of issues related to adoption and foster care and developing new homes for children in need. Recruitment can focus on a population of children, such as handicapped youngsters, or it can target the special needs of individual children.

Recruitment activities can be divided into three categories:

- Formal - the overall plan or campaign for the dissemination of information and the development of new homes.
- Informal - the day to day staff activity which promotes positive public image and awareness and involves community leaders and active foster and adoptive parents in the search for homes.
- Response - the engagement process between inquirer and agency.

Although the Recruitment Specialists and Home Finding Specialists in each office hold primary responsibility for overseeing and coordinating activity, recruitment activity cannot succeed without the full commitment and support of the entire agency.

Formal Recruitment 8-17-90

A formal recruitment plan is multi-faceted and provides for statewide as well as local campaigns. Its efforts encompass general categories as well as specific child need issues. The program design targets various cultural and racial populations. The Recruitment Specialist and Home Finding Specialist in each county/LO are responsible for participation on the statewide level for insuring that local efforts are compatible with the general campaign, while adequately addressing local needs and resources. See [CP&P-IV-B-1-200](#), Recruitment Plans.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the overall recruitment effort, it is essential to enlist the services and assistance of outside community groups and leaders. It is also helpful to have the support and/or endorsement of a prominent individual or celebrity. Such endorsements lend credibility to the recruitment effort but, more importantly, the endorsements promote interest by the public. However, celebrity support is of little value unless it is part of a larger, coordinated recruitment campaign with appropriate follow-up response.

Types of Formal Recruitment 8-17-90

Formal recruitment activity may include any activity designed to be part of an overall recruitment campaign whether the specific effort is on a large or small scale. Such activity may include, but is not limited to:

- public service television or radio announcements;
- utilizing private sources of publicity such as newsletters for labor organizations, corporations, or the military;
- statewide adoption or foster care week;
- development of informational pamphlets and posters in English and Spanish;
- development of adoption listings and exchange programs;
- distribution of resource material;
- public speaking engagements;
- development of community and corporate interest, sponsorship, and advocacy;
- statewide/area/local informational or recognition conferences;
- participation in a "One Church, One Child" type program, a church-state partnership for recruitment as well as other partnership relationships with the religious community;
- development of public awareness programs;
- development of major recruitment initiatives;
- preparing photo listings with regular updated reports;
- contracting with professional advertisement agencies for recruitment campaign activities;

- celebrity endorsement.

No formal recruitment program is complete without a strong informal component that augments the larger campaign goals. The Recruitment or Home Finding Specialist serves as liaison to statewide activity by sharing information about local initiatives and insuring that statewide efforts are responsive to local needs. In the capacity of liaison, the Specialist also disseminates information, a function which is particularly important to promote adequate response when inquiries are generated by recruitment efforts.

Informal Recruitment 8-17-9

Informal recruitment runs the gamut of any internal and external activity that reinforces public awareness and promotes interest in children for whom substitute homes are needed. It generally involves direct contact between agency staff and a person or group in the community. It may be a casual luncheon engagement between a staff member and an interested community sponsor such as a clergyman, corporate or local business person, an in-house staff group, or it may be part of a highly structured statewide campaign that emphasizes local concerns. Informal recruitment initiatives are noted on the Recruitment Plans (see [CP&P-IV-B-1-200](#)).

Recruitment must become second nature to all those interested in child welfare so that every opportunity to recruit is pursued to full advantage. Generally, a year or so passes between the time an individual's interest is initially stirred until that interest is pursued to the point of inquiry. Thus, it is extremely important that the potential applicant's interest is regularly reinforced. Informal recruitment activity helps keep the recruitment objectives in the public eye and includes, but is not limited to:

- public speaking at schools, community groups, fairs or special events;
- holding an open house for community members to visit local offices;
- maintaining regular, on-going semi-social contacts such as lunch with community leaders or civic groups, church auxiliaries, active foster/adoptive parents, or staff of other agencies with compatible interests or goals;
- pursuing media events, such as "waiting child" columns in local newspapers, feature articles on special events or special foster/adoptive families, radio talk shows, or T.V. announcements;
- developing a comprehensive list of community organizations that may be able to provide valuable volunteer assistance;
- developing programs for resource parent sponsorship of new families and applicants;

- encouraging the recruitment of new homes by existing foster and adoptive parents;
- closely collaborating with foster and adoptive parents for ongoing agency assessment of how CP&P can do the job better and for volunteer assistance to expand CP&P' ability to reach more potential foster and adoptive homes;
- distributing posters, pamphlets, cards, stickers on substitute parenting;
- developing and encouraging support groups from existing foster and adoptive parents;
- enlisting the support, ideas, and efforts of local businesses and corporations in recruitment activity.

Response 8-17-90

Whenever an inquiry is generated, it is essential that the inquirer's first contact with the agency be supportive, encouraging, and informative. The inquirer may have considered the matter at length prior to contacting the agency or he might have responded spontaneously to a newspaper article or poster. The Worker's primary objectives at this stage of recruitment are:

- to convey appreciation for the inquiry;
- to express belief that the inquirer is a potential resource for a child;
- to express the agency's commitment to finding families for children;
- to extend assistance to the inquirer in the adoption or foster care process;
- to provide information; and
- to obtain basic information.

The purpose of recruitment is to screen in, not screen out, potential families.

It is essential that each Local Office establish a system for receiving, tracking and processing inquiries in a timely and efficient manner. At no time should an inquirer be referred to another office for preliminary information on substitute care on a specific child. The person taking the inquiry, if he cannot provide preliminary information directly, determines the inquirer's preliminary questions and recontacts the inquirer as soon as the answers to the preliminary questions have been determined. The return call occurs no later than the next working day. Once preliminary questions have been answered, the inquirer may be appropriately referred to a more suitable resource for in-

depth information. The inquirer is advised that his inquiry is being routed to the appropriate office and the address and telephone number of that office is provided.

A short written letter with a copy to the appropriate office keeps the inquirer engaged and cues the receiving office to follow-up. Whenever possible, appropriate recruitment literature is included with the letter to the inquirer.